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The Birth of an Eternal King

BY JOHN TIMOTHY STONE

And of his kingdom there shall be no end. Luke 1:33.

NOTICE first of all that this kingdom of our Lord brought first into the world the real meaning of the incarnation of human sacrifice and service. The world had known something of the formalism of giving gifts in regal presentation, but the unselfish sacrifice and love of men, one to another, had never before been known. The wonderful teaching which came in his incarnation was without parallel, for he made himself King, universal and eternal, and then *gave himself* to man.

The King came to live and rule and reign in the hearts of men, within their very lives, not externally. We sing in that old hymn—"Kingdoms rise and wane, but the church of Jesus constant shall remain." Walls will ever crumble, empires ever fall, sovereigns will ever lose their sway, but Jesus Christ came to reign eternally, and to rule within the hearts of men. The very conception of such a truth was never known before. The gift was not external, but the gift was one of the heart, the sending of his love into the hearts of the world! And he controls not only the heart, but because he controls the heart, he controls also the wills and actions of men.

A New Ideal

The entire conception of such a kingdom was new to the world. It is new today. Our missions in China and India, in Tibet and in the islands of the sea find

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this to be true; natives open their eyes and minds in wonder when we speak of a love that has not some requirement in it, that makes no demand save the demand of affection. The human heart cannot understand what actual unselfishness is.

It is said by one of our great educators that America has redefined diplomacy in giving to the nations the true conditions, and revealing through frankness and simplicity the actual truth. Whether this is so or not, it certainly was marvelous that the eternal and universal King preceded his reign by incarnating, embodying in himself the very principles which were to control the lives of his subjects. He must be the Life if other men were to live that life. The life of the Sovereign became the life of the people, because the heart of the Sovereign became the heart of the people.

Sovereign Love

A little child was sick in one of the humble cottages outside of the royal home at Balmoral. No one knew how sick she really was. Her father had just come as the royal assistant gardener. The little child wasted and wasted, for she was not nourished aright. All were very anxious. One day, commonly clad, came a matronly mother-soul, bringing a pitcher of fresh milk. She went into that little kitchen and made the fire and prepared the warm milk, giving it to the little girl. She put the mother to bed, for she was worn and wearied and could scarcely stand. The mother did not know who the motherly soul was, with her loving deeds and personal thought. The little girl recovered, and when on a gala-day the mother looked upon the face of Queen Victoria, she recognized the woman who had come to that humble cottage and had warmed that milk and made her rest. Queen Victoria was loved among royalty and peasants alike, for she gave her life and heart to her people. Her love was in her every act and revealed her heart. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." The love of Christ reveals to us the sovereign love of the eternal God, for he was born to earth in Bethlehem, and revealed to earth his sovereign love.

A Trinity of Life

This divine life reveals itself in three ways: In Love, in Joy and in Peace.

Love has within it an association of relationship, of kith and kin. Thus hope and faith are akin to love. All through this Word of God, not only in Paul's wonderful Corinthian letter, and in the gospel of John, but through the Old Testament as well, we find that faith, hope and love go together. Truly, love is the greatest, but love begets faith and faith begets hope. They cannot be disassociated. They are triune. They have an eternal, vital relationship.

Faith allows that you and I may love and hope in mystery, but that mystery does not estrange us, but rather binds us closer. It does not drive us from God, but draws us with its sure and fascinating attraction. Faith believes where it does not see; trusts where it cannot know—this is faith! Faith is closely associated with all our true religion. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." When we can define and understand, there is no need of faith. When faith materializes, there will be no need of belief.

Faith Beholds Eternity

The mystery of the Godhead has always been a perplexity to some people, and no doubt always will be. The interrogation point, the question mark of life, has caused the "if" to take the place of the period, and affirmation; but when a man loves God, and when a

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man sees Jesus Christ by faith, and believes, then love shows itself in hope and faith. There is a beyond to such faith, for "now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now we know in part, but then we shall know even as also we are known."

Have you ever looked at a distant mountain peak through a powerful magnifying glass? You now see the distance. Formerly it has all been one great common spot to you! A distant landscape with the bits of green! But now you see men climbing. You can even see the motion of their hands. True, you cannot see the rope which binds them together, but you can distinguish them, and you count—one, two, three, four. The landscape is not now a mere scene of beauty; it is vitalized with life. By faith we are looking at the great landscape of eternity, and if in it we see a King who is eternal, it is vitalized; the magnifying glass of faith reveals an eternal King.

Little children today are not anxious. They are curious. There is a distinction. They are not anxious at Christmas time as to what the white packages with

red ribbons contain! They are very curious. Why? Because they know they are loved, and the whole matter of faith and hope is answered when one loves and is loved. We have had children tell us what they hope they will get for Christmas. Others have said, "I *know* what I am going to get." "How do you know?" we ask. "Well, mother asked me what I wanted." Such may be our faith. "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." "All things are possible to him that believeth." "All things work together for good to them that love God."

Controversy and the Kingdom

If God is love, we need not be troubled about the boundaries or definitions of our faith. Why should we have religious controversy? If the church will fix her eyes upon the Lord Jesus Christ and see him alone, she will be so busy in winning others to him, and revealing his love, that she will not take time to conduct a tribunal for the faith of others. God knows his own. "Let the wheat and the tares grow until the harvest," said the Master. He will take care of them all.

People with troubled faces sometimes say, "Is the church going to pieces?" "Will she be split up in divisions?" No! let us take the wrinkles from our foreheads. Why be troubled? God is in his heaven and knows those who are his, and if you and I in faith and hope and love do our part, and busy ourselves in the service of our Lord, he will care for his own.

Faith needs no question mark. It has confidence, hope and love. We need not fear.

In the student days of Robert McCheyne and Andrew Bonar, the story comes that they had a discussion about their beliefs, and then one said, "Let us not argue; let us go into the inner room and pray." Anger had been threatening, but they rose to grasp each other's hands and praise the God they loved. They were known in theological days as "the men who loved each other." If a man seems an heretic today, do we pray for him that he may see the light, or are we inclined to tell of his heresy to some one else?

It sometimes seems as if Satan tries to promote argument in the church at a time when the church most needs a revival of Christ's spirit.

During the last half-century, how many books have been written, how many articles have been published, to prove that such-and-such an interpretation of God, or Christ, or the church, or immortality is to be accepted! Since the world war, at a time when real religion has surely been needed by the world, there has been a continual battle among the churches on matters of doctrinal interpretation. This is, in truth, a "scandal of Christianity"!

If we can place Jesus Christ in our hearts and lives as he longs to be, there will be little contention among members of his church. He will prompt us to love one another as we do his will.

"He That Doeth the Will"

There are two other words in our theme, and they have to do with something more than faith. They have to do with our consistency, the life which the world sees. These words are Will and Action. These represent the practical side of faith, hope, love, joy and peace. "He that *doeth* the *will* shall know the doctrine."

Some years ago I stood beside the tomb of Dwight L. Moody at Northfield, Massachusetts—that rock in its rough splendor—and there read the words engraved thereon: "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever." What an inscription! Doing his will provides an entrance into an eternal kingdom, a kingdom without end. Recall how we close the Lord's prayer? "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen." An eternal kingdom! You and I, and all of us, are associated with a kingdom that is without end.

"He that doeth the will of God abideth forever." If we have the love, the joy, the peace, the faith, the hope of the Christ in this earthly life, our *wills* must be his. "Not my will, but thine." And, if the will is submissive to his, then our actions will inevitably be right.

Action in the Christian Life

The great question of all times is the life; the action! If men act the Christian life and follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, they are doing the will of God.

Many times I think about the early years of my pastorate. I recall a home which no longer exists; parents have gone to the home above. The children are scattered. It was about Christmas time and the mother said as I entered, "Come back where the children are working. Father and I are back there, too." We went back. It was the day before Christmas. The father had left his busy office early, and had come home to help fill the Christmas baskets. (Baskets were not sent out then as they are today.) But here was a man, his wife and children, all working together for others. Each child had a special interest, and all knew where each basket was going. As I went to the front door with the father, he said, "You know the children love it so, we can't get away from it. They arrange it all now. We started when they were little children, and now they do not seem to give a thought as to what they are going to get for Christmas themselves. All they think of seems to be the baskets, and they are already planning to help some of these same children with their education."

That home is more than a memory. It illustrates our text. We, too, are children in God's far-reaching home.

He is the eternal Christ. He lives in the hearts of men. He lives in our children's hearts. If the heart of a child is made a home for the Christ, then he will reign eternally, and when you and I are gone and the home breaks up, he will live and reign in our children's hearts always.

This is the meaning of Christ's eternal kingdom. This *is* the birth of the soul into that eternal kingdom. This is the coming of the kingdom that shall have no end, for it is within us, and we ourselves are born again.

No Room in the Inn

By Wendell P. Keeler

There was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:7.

THIS is not difficult to understand. It was the busy season in Jerusalem and its suburbs. Crowds were going up to the capital, and hotel accommodations were in demand. It was like Washington the day before a presidential inauguration, or New London before the boat race, or Atlantic City at Easter time. All rooms could be rented at top prices. To be sure, the Mary for whom Joseph sought a lodging might have appealed for considerate treatment because of her condition. But Joseph and Mary could not pay the prices, and after all the inn-keeper was not conducting the inn for his health. He was out for the money return, and this was his harvest time, and he must make the most of it. Looked at from a common sense commercial standpoint, there was clearly no room for Joseph and Mary at the inn.

There was likewise a social reason why there was no room for them. The Bethlehem inn was well situated at a convenient distance from Jerusalem, and the inn-keeper, being a clever fellow and knowing how to get ahead in the world, was building up a select clientele. He looked forward to the time when the inn register would be a small edition of "Who's Who in Galilee." Travelers would stop there not only because of the food, but because they would meet the right kind of people. That would be something worth while. But Joseph and Mary were not the sort of travelers to advertise the inn from this standpoint. When we look at the master paitings of the Madonna—when for example we look at Corregio's picture in the Uffizi gallery, that picture with the delicate beauty of Mary's face and the unforgetable color of her robes, we wonder how any innkeeper could have turned her away. But Mary did not look like that to the Bethlehem inn-keeper. He saw only a drab peasant woman and standing beside her a carpenter from an insignificant village, with rough hands and rough clothes. Clearly, from the standpoint of making his inn a social success, there was no room for such people.

The Glory of Meekness

There was a third reason why the inn-keeper could not take them in. It was a reason in the back of his mind which perhaps he never clearly enunciated even to himself, but which any inn-keeper would understand. Perhaps he had one room left, or there was his own room which he sometimes turned out of in an emergency. But he must have one room that he could give to the kind of people who knew how to demand it. There are people who go along a highway, and go through the world, getting what they want, because—well, because they know how to elbow other people out of the way and get what they want. Joseph and Mary were not this kind. One can scarcely picture the parents of Jesus as go-getters. They would not make a fuss. If there was no room in the inn, and they were too weary to travel farther, they would go to the stable and be grateful for a manger. The inn-keeper could see this at a glance and this makes his refusal of a room all the clearer.

I say we can easily understand the situation. One reads comments on this incident in old books and sermons and finds expressions of amazement that the mother of Jesus was shut out, so that the Son of God was born perforce in a stable. But we of this age are not amazed. We can easily apprehend the commercial and social and prudential reasons why the inn-keeper acted as he did. We understand it all perfectly.

Commercialism

I wonder whether we understand it too perfectly. Can it be that the spirit of our time makes it quite natural to shut out the Christ-child—almost inevitable indeed? Do our commercial, and social, and ethical standards make it difficult for us to find a genuine and openly recognized place for the babe of Bethlehem and all that he stands for?

By way of a concrete test: How much place is there for the Christ-child in the very celebration of his birth? How widely and how sincerely and how devoutly will we as a people seek to place Christ in the midst of it all? We know how large a place commercialism claims in the Christmas celebration. At least four-fifths of the daily papers are now occupied in advertisements of Christmas gifts. We know how large a place social festivities claim. There are not days enough nor hours enough to provide for them all. Very well—we do not mean to decry either Christmas giving nor Christmas pleasures. Jesus, who was one of the most social of men, would wish us to celebrate his birthday happily with as many friends as possible. And surely the giving of gifts is entirely in keeping with the festival. It was a gift that began it. But what I am asking is, whether we are really keeping a place for Christ? Can it be that like the inn-keeper of old we are giving commercialism half the rooms and social festivities the other half, and relegating Christ to an inconspicuous spot in the stable? This is a nominally Christian country and Christmas is presumably a religious festival. Would a Hindu guess from the daily papers or from chance conversation that we are preparing devoutly to celebrate the birth of our Lord?

Christ and Christmas

There is a way, of course, of giving Jesus a real place in the popular aspects of the Christmas celebration. If our social life is kept clean and wholesome, and considerate and kindly, for his sake; if our giving to our friends and dear ones is in his spirit, especially if our giving includes those to whom we would not give but for his sake—the underprivileged, the sick, the destitute, the lonely, the despairing; if, instead of being irritated by the multiplicity of appeals, we welcome chances to bring cheer and helpfulness, remembering that this was precisely what Jesus himself did—

if we do all this, then of course we place him in the midst. If, in our homes, the children are frequently reminded that at this time we are rejoicing in the Savior's birth, and if they also are truly inspired with the spirit of Jesus in their giving and their joys, then we are bringing the Christ-child into the center of our Christmas hospitality. It is not impossible, of course. One likes to believe that it is widely done. But let us recognize that it does not do itself in this age in which we live. If we make no effort to save a place for the Christ-child, he will be shut out from his own festival.

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Now, the way we celebrate Christmas illustrates a trend of the time which constitutes a real and serious menace to our spiritual life. I do not say to our religious life—although that is included. I mean the larger thing—all our life in the realm of the spirit. The danger is that by our absorption in interests that are comparatively crude and superficial, we may shut out the finer things that make for genuine character and enriched personality and the peace of heart that the world can neither give nor take away.

Shutting Out Humility

What was it that the Bethlehem inn-keeper really shut out when he closed the door in the face of Mary, the mother of Jesus? What were the qualities of heart that Mary embodied and carried with her to the stable, as over against the qualities embodied by some blustering bejeweled merchant from Capernaum whom the inn-keeper eagerly admitted? One of these qualities was humility. Mary knew in her heart that her child was destined to unexampled greatness. But this did not seem to her to be a reason for demanding a place in the inn. She preferred that her baby should be born in a manger surrounded only by those who loved him, rather than that he should be born in a room won by contention. She was great enough to be humble. And this quality, shown on Christmas eve, was one of the beautiful characteristics of her life. After her boy grew to be a man and spake as never man spake, and wrought such deeds as drew great crowds about him, who followed him from place to place, Mary never intruded herself. She remained at home and prayed. Only at the end, when she learned that her son was facing crucifixion and seemed to need her, did she make her way to Jerusalem and take her place at the foot of the cross. Surely Mary's true greatness of soul is seen in her very obscurity, in the gospel narrative.

"Blessed Are the Arrogant"

Humility is not a conspicuous twentieth century characteristic. When we repeat the beatitudes we pass rather hurriedly over the one that declares, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." The twentieth century mind cannot quite accept that. In this respect, at least, Nietzsche has more disciples than Jesus. Nietzsche's beatitude is "Blessed are the arrogant who, when they see what they want, take it." And yet we have a disturbing recollection that it was because a great nation followed that counsel and demanded a place in the sun and proceeded to go after it, that disaster followed. Perhaps Jesus was right. Perhaps it is better to deserve a place than to get it. Perhaps it is better to be great at heart than to be on the front page. At any rate, here is something that mothers may well have in mind as they read the Christmas story to their children. One of the chief spiritual dangers that confronts a generation of boys and girls growing up in a self-advertising age is that they shall utterly miss appreciating the fineness of humility as a quality of heart. It is one of the things that our age shuts out. But if they miss humility, the boys can never be God's gentlemen, nor can the girls be gentlewomen in the best meaning of that term.

No Room for Love

Another thing the inn-keeper shut out was love. He shut it out by his action, not only because Mary embodied love in its most beautiful and self-giving form, but also because, under the circumstances, the inn-keeper must have been conscious that he was sacrificing human kindness to material gain. Unless his finer feelings had already been smothered, he must have heard a still small voice appealing to him for considerate treatment of Mary. But this voice was silenced by what seemed to be the inexorable demands of business. He had to choose between love and gold, and he chose gold and shut the door. Suppose that an impulse of generous warm-heartedness had won the day at that moment. Suppose he had provided for Mary and seen to it that she was cared for. Suppose he had taken a friendly interest in that little babe born under his roof, and kept in touch with the family.

Suppose he had welcomed them to his inn when, twelve years later, Joseph and Mary brought Jesus, now a handsome lad, to Jerusalem. Suppose the inn-keeper had welcomed Jesus as a guest when in the glory of his manhood Jesus had come with the words of life and salvation; can we picture what it would all have meant to that man?

There are flashes struck from midnights,
  There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
Whereby piled up honors perish,
  Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle;
While just this or that poor impulse,
  Which for once had play unstifled,
Seems the sole work of a lifetime,
  That away the rest have trifled.

The inn-keeper made a mistake when he shut love out. Let us make room for love!

Have We Shut Out God?

And finally, the inn-keeper shut out God. Perhaps he did this quite unconsciously. By shutting out humility and simplicity of heart, by shutting out love and kindliness, perhaps he shut out God without realizing what he was doing. Or perhaps he would have shut out God if he had known what he was doing. Business was good, his inn was filled with the right sort of people. He was getting on prosperously. What did he need of God? Last summer the archbishops of York and Canterbury issued a pastoral letter which included this sentence: "We are enclosed by a material civilization great in its achievements, confident in its self-sufficiency, in which no place is found for God or even for the spiritual life of man." That is a very solemnizing statement, but it is made by highly responsible men. Can it be true? Has our civilization grown so arrogant in its material achievements and its self-sufficiency that we no longer need God? Are we dispensing with God in the life of society at large? Are we dispensing with God in the life of our homes, or in the inner life of our souls? If so, how hollow life will become! How barren of valid hopes, or deep comfort, or adequate motive, or ultimate assurances of any sort! No, we cannot dispense with God. There have been times in history when nations have tried it and have been led by their experiences into a moral and spiritual desert, from which they have come back, in those great movements of religious revival which have indicated their dissatisfaction, their homesickness of soul in a far country.

God has made us for himself, and apart from him we never can find the ultimate satisfaction of our hearts. Because we are spiritual personalities we are children of the Great Spirit and there is implanted in our hearts an instinctive need of the Father. Let us make room for God! We are busy people. Our lives, like the Bethlehem inn, are full, but we cannot shut out the best. We cannot exclude divinity. If, at this Christmas season, there is to be a Christmas glow in the inn, and a sound as of angels singing, it will be because we have thrown open the door and made a place for the Christ.

The Light of the World

By James M. Stifler

A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel. Luke 2:32.

IN each of the stories of Jesus' infancy it appears that some of the participants have an understanding of what the coming of this child means. Contrasted with these who do know the meaning of his birth is a group who do not sense it. The angels who sang in the starlit sky sang because they saw the coming of a day when the starlight would no longer be reflected on man-killing weapons nor fall on homes of poverty and disease. How much the wise men from the east knew about him we can only surmise, but they identified him as the leader in a new day for humanity and worshiped him as a king. The shepherds, according to the story, were recipients of an amazing experience but did not know what it all meant, even after they had gone to the manger at the inn.

Joseph and Mary represent an affectionate loyalty to a commission that has been given to them which yet they do not comprehend. They have absolute confidence in the God who they know has sent them out on this adventure, but they do not know where it is to lead them. That dear woman Mary did not understand her son until he was about to pass from her eyes.

The Insight of Simeon

Of all those who appear at the birth scenes the two old persons in the temple seem to have seen most clearly what this child meant to human existence. In trustful fulfillment of everything that they had been taught as right, Joseph and Mary bring their baby up to the temple to present him to the Lord in token that he was God's to take and use. There in the temple was Simeon, and Simeon understood. According to all our experience Simeon was just the sort of man who should have understood. He was toward the end of a long life of spiritual aspiration and effort. He had come to understand the heart of God, he was intimate with holy things, the spirit of God was upon him. The sight of Jesus was to him the fulfillment of his ardent dream and prayers. How well he saw what Jesus meant we can read in his exclamation as the child was placed in his arms:

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

Once again it is the day of his birth, in celebration. We pause once more to contemplate the meaning of his coming. Humanity has had two millenniums of experience with Jesus. Some things that Simeon could

not have known in detail are our joyful possession, yet still that old man's vision stretches out beyond our time for its fulfillment—"a light to lighten the nations and the glory of thy people Israel."

A New Ideal

What a new ideal of manhood that child ushered into the minds of men! With our first day of conscious personality we have an instinct for doing, for

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accomplishing. If we are strong enough to compel other men to do our will, then we are multiplied by just so much. The captain of a hundred is a hundred-man-power person and the general of ten thousand that much greater, and the emperor is his empire in person. This was the basic philosophy of life for mankind when Jesus was born. Men knew no other. For the major part of mankind it is the desired goal of existence today. The terms of this urge are different today, men now know that there is power for which armies are but pawns and servants. The will to power is just the same. It animates individuals and is multiplied when the individuals are acting in a mass. One violet on a hillside is not visable; when the hillside is covered with violets the whole looks blue. The selfish ambition of one man does not look dangerous; but let millions of such men be gathered together and go out to do their selfish will, and you behold what our incredulous eyes beheld from 1914 to 1918 and after.

When Jesus has his way, as Simeon saw that he some day would, men will have a different conception of manhood. No Alexander, Caesar or Napoleon ever set out more deliberately to conquer humanity than Jesus did. His goal was greater than even these dared to set for themselves. They merely wanted to conquer peoples; Jesus set out to mould all nations into one, with himself as their acknowledged leader.

But here the parallel ends. The Caesars could do no more than conquer by force and hold while they could. Jesus means to gather all men together in such a fashion that they will stay together of their own desire. They built on force that crushed men's wills; Jesus will build on an emotion that enlists the joyful consent of men. The empires of the Caesars rise quickly and look splendid, but they fall apart so rapidly and end in trash. Jesus' empire is very slow in building but every stone once put in place is there forever and ever.

The Attraction of Jesus

The power that he uses is the power that brings men together and holds them together, in confidence, desire, and affection. As we turn again the pages of Luke's story of his life we see it in operation, though we have no one word, not even "love," that describes it.

The men that Jesus gathered around him had for him a singular feeling. He was their master, but they felt free to talk with him; they took no liberties with him but they were not in the least afraid of him. At one moment he seems to them as a God and the next they are afraid that they will all be drowned in the same boat with him. His own mother one day tells the servants to do what he says—"he can turn water into wine if he wants to." A few days later she sends a message into a crowded house and begs him to come home until he gets over this crazy fit.

The disciples, none of them, feel about him as men seem to have felt about Moses or Elijah, two of their great national heroes. Moses and Elijah were undeniably great men, but they were a little terrifying. It wasn't safe to get in their way; thousands of men perished because they dared disobey Moses and many hundreds at least were slain because they opposed Elijah. Men obeyed them but stood at a distance from them. But whether they were obeying him or arguing in opposition to him, men seemed to want to be near Jesus personally, to touch him, eat at the same table with him, to keep as close as they could to him. They were half awed, and half believing that he was all right and they were all wrong.

A New Kind of Manhood

Jesus was a different sort of a man, and his was a different sort of a manhood than the world had ever seen. The old manhood had failed, there was no assurance that it ever could do anything but fail. It left men in the dark. The new manhood that came at Bethlehem will not fail; Simeon saw that it would not; he was the light that would lighten the Gentiles, and so the wise old man rejoiced.

There is a sweeter and more intimate ray of light that Jesus brings to us as individuals when we are in days that are dark. It is the same light broken up into separate rays that strike upon my own heart.

A man was in a hospital; he had been struck down in full health—a motor accident. He could not know

whether he would live, or if he lived whether he would be a cripple. The pain was intense, he had endured it as long as he could. The hospital bed was strange, the walls were bare; he did not even know where he was; he was alone, desperately alone and in the dark and at last he called out. The door opened and a soft blessed light came in and in the light the figure of a nurse appeared. Her voice was gentle, she was so confident, so composed, so kindly, and promised that she would stay right there until day came. Ah, what a difference! Pain is half gone when we do not have to be alone and in the dark with it.

A Friendly Companion

Half the business of living is to encounter pain and loneliness of some sort, and that which is of the heart is more bitter than that of the flesh. Here Jesus is apart from all other leaders of men—he is not only the leader of nations, but is also the personal companion, sympathetic, understanding and competent friend of each single one of us. No wonder men will follow him! If ever they come to know him as he is, they are his men to the end. He is light, not only to the far off peoples, he is light in the far off and deep down places in *my* heart.

Jesus brings a new light on the very commonplace things of life. He makes the commonplace seem to shine with a sort of dignity. Jesus did not rhapsodize about the dignity of work and its responsibilities; he did not write poetry about the magnificence of men nor the beauty and loveliness of women and little children. He did not publish essays about home management, thrift, diligence and ambition. But the effect of his way of looking at life was to make men feel that conscientious work was of the very essence of manhood. He worked; and it is not recorded that he ever bragged about it or pointed to it as an indication of his siding with the working class. One gathers from the story that he entered life as a member of a family and accepted that as a part of the will of God and did his carpentering with exactly the same motives that he did his preaching and went to his cross. There was the great Father behind all living; he has a path and a place for every man, woman and child and our business is to do what is set before us and do it well.

We easily incline to the feeling that the familiar thing is not important, and conversely that the far away thing is very elevated. Because work, households, children, food, laughter and sleep are constant we so easily feel that they are ordinary. We show our habitual error no more clearly than when we speak of Jesus *condescending* to live in our human life. If our everyday human life is what he assumes it to be, it was no condescension at all. If we are what he said we are, the children of God, then the workshop and the nursery are a part of the eternal pattern of the heaven of heavens.

Light on the Commonplace

We have only now, after two thousands of years, come to the edge of understanding that there is nothing that God calls common or unclean. We have always made the basic error of dividing existence into two phases, when it is in fact of one piece. We think of heaven as "up there" and earth as "down here." We talk of God as divine and ourselves as human. We have argued for centuries as to whether Jesus was divine or human. We divided the very universe itself into matter and spirit, the natural and the supernatural. Jesus never made any such distinction at all and now the men from the laboratories, when they study the dust that we walk on, come from their places with calm faces and say that there is no such thing as matter. There is no inert, lifeless stuff in the universe. Everything is in motion. Everything is some form of vibration or action. Everything, from the orator's eloquence to the concrete curbstone, is of the same essence.

Jesus a Poet

Jesus was no laboratory man. His assurance about life came from other channels, sources more like those of the poet and prophet. But if this is a real fact of our universe, the real truth of it, that is exactly where every successful seeker after truth would come out. When all of us get out of our mental confusion—economist, statesman, industrial leader, scientist, theologian, et al. —we shall find ourselves at the same spot where Jesus is and wonder why we were so long getting there. It will be no wonder if the first thing we do in heaven will be to laugh!

We sometimes say that Jesus honored woman and gave sanctity to childhood, and our very terms show that we are still apart from the truth. There isn't any part of human existence that he singled out for honor. It is all divine, every bit of it, every human being is a potential child of God.

In a jewelry factory there is nothing common or unclean. The very sweepings are kept and refined because there is gold and silver and diamond dust in those sweepings. Work is no more sacred than play and milking a cow is just as honorable as presiding over a university. We have a long way to travel before we get away from the dusky shades of ignorance and cease to think in terms of sacred and secular.

No "Classes" with Jesus

When Jesus walked among men as light, they saw that women and children were just the same in his eyes as men. He did not say it; he just acted that way and men perceived it. It was the same with regard to slavery and slaves. He did not orate about the human injustice of slavery, though it was a festering sore in the social system amid which he lived. He did not talk about classes. He acted as if they did not exist. He ate with the rich and the poor indifferently, he visited with the orthodox churchmen and with the publicans and sinners without even calling attention to it. He did not talk much about personal habits. He lived as a decent man should. A man can always be trusted to do right when his heart is set first on high and holy things. That was the reason men could not understand him. They always classified things; he never did. We still classify things—home and for-

eign, physical and spiritual, secular and sacred. To Jesus there were only two classes of men: those who were living with God first in their minds, and those who were living to the flesh—and even that did not cancel the fact that they were brothers and children of the same Father.

Let us thank God for a period like Christmas. It warms many a heart to a twilight sharing of Jesus' spirit. Recently a forger sentenced to fifteen years, having served most of his term, was due for a parole if anyone would accept responsibility for him. No one would. Then the Christmas holidays came and a clever official advertised for some sponsor and under the softening influence of the Nativity, a dozen offers came in. This was normal and right and it points the way to what the spirit of Jesus can do and may be expected to do when it touches the hearts of men.

Light on the Unseen

The one who was given to humanity for their good could not bring light on all things visible without at the same time bringing light on that which is invisible; for which contradiction in terms we need no explanation. With us men, the visible affairs of life are governed by what we think, see, or believe about the invisible. When men think there is no personal God at all, they develop in certain lines, their mores are dictated by individual taste and prudence. When men think of God as Jupiter hurling thunder-bolts and making amorous visits to Leda, their conduct is framed accordingly. Is there any conceivable picture of God that some men have not believed in? They have exalted war, sex, the sun, fire, water, blood, everything in their views of God. The dominating factor in modern civilization is the application of the physical sciences —chemistry, biology, mechanics.

The use of these things *makes* our present civilization. Consequently some men deify what they call "law," natural law. It has produced a civilization that is in a fair way to master everything but men themselves. We are in a position now to produce food, raw materials and manufactured goods in excess of our needs or power of consumption, but we are at sea about what constitutes an education. We even know the secret composition of the stars, but our "Law" God does not tell us how to bring happiness to our homes and sweetness in the business of life.

Law Does Not Suffice

With wealth at our disposal the like of which the Caesars never dreamed of, we are in distress and confusion on every hand. We are adrift on a sea of "problems." The sum total of our inner satisfaction is certainly no greater than it ever was—except with a certain group among us.

There is a group of men and women who have steadiness amid all the "problems," their homes are not menaced by disruption and their affairs do not hurry them into nervous exhaustion. Their minds are not in constant confusion and their faces testify to the inner peace and assurance of their thoughts.

These are they who do not worship the great god "Law"; they worship a god whom Jesus unveiled whose name is "Love." To them "law" exists, but it is the servant of love, love of a person like themselves. They cannot prove him with logarithmic tables, test tubes, or callipers, but they see him as an artist sees beauty. They see him as they do a mother in whom a helpless baby can confide with utter faith and trust.

Jesus His Own Proof

Their proof, if proof they have, is Jesus himself; he is their light and they are satisfied. They accepted his invitation and, weary with theories and heavy laden with anxieties, they learned from Jesus the power of trust in the goodness of the God who stands behind all and in all and through all. They have listened to the teacher as he says, "he that hath seen me, hath seen God." They have seen Jesus, seen that he cared for everyone and was enemy of none. When they were sick, he cared for them and cured them. Men were insane, and he quieted their ravings. They were friendless, and he befriended them and brought them friends. They were guilty, and he forgave them. They see that Jesus was not even baffled by death itself. The great god "Law" says "death is the end." Jesus says, I am victor over death and whosoever believeth on me shall never die. Such faith banishes fear, and with fear gone, health of both mind and body is on the increase; they walk victorious.

> Thou wast their rock, their fortress and their might,
> Thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight,
> Thou in the darkness drear, the one true light.

There is a lovely native instinct in the human heart that will not be denied. Like a light within a box in the dark, if there is the least chink or crack, it will shine out. Call it what we will, it somehow finds its true expression. Jesus is light. The symbol of his birth was a star. Simeon saw him as a light shining far out to the ends of the earth.

Jesus called himself a light. Our instinct does not fail us at Christmas. A Christmas celebration is inconceivable without lights. And every light, every candle, every little electric bulb on every tree is right and true and speaks just what it should. He is the one great light and the open way to life and endless joy.

The True Need

I DO not wish to see my sins more plain,
But this: to know Thy life, without a stain.

I would not see the vileness of my heart,
But this would know: how pure and true Thou art.

I would forget my paltry life, so small,
And know Thy greatness, Thou, my All in All.

Oh, teach me not how deep my spirit's night,
But flood me with Thy beams, Thou Perfect Light!

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

Belief in the Deity of Christ

By H. P. Almon Abbott

"I believe....in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord." From the Apostles' Creed.

IT is for the revelation of God as Father that the human heart craves. "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." That is the cry of all mankind. Christ, alone, makes the contribution to our knowledge that God is our Father. As he himself says: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

The question arises: Why should we accept Christ's word as authoritative? Why should we be ready to accept his revelation merely on his *ipse dixit?* Why should we believe in the Father simply because Jesus Christ believed in the Father? There is only one answer to that question. We believe in the Father, as revealed by Jesus Christ, because between God and Jesus there is a solitary and unique relationship. He is "the only begotten Son of the Father." When he spoke of God, he spoke with the certitude of one who shared the divine nature. In other words, Jesus was "God manifest in the flesh."

The fatherhood of God and the divine sonship stand or fall together. The Creed bears that out. Unlike the other clauses in the Creed, a conjunction couples the first and second clauses together. "I believe in God the Father Almighty. *And* in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord." They are so coupled because they are mutually dependent. You cannot have the one without the other.

Now, what grounds have we for believing that Jesus occupies this unique position in relationship with God? Why do we believe that Jesus was "God manifest in the flesh?" That is: Why do we believe in the deity of Christ?

Evidences of Incarnation

The expectation of an incarnation: If there is a personal God at the heart of things, it is only natural that he should reveal himself. Self-communication is an essential function of personality. God created man in order that he might have free intercourse with man. Again: the personal God can only reveal himself adequately in a Person spiritually akin to himself. God is spirit, and man is spirit, too. The history of mankind as well as the unvarying testimony of the Bible is to the effect that God and man are spiritually akin.

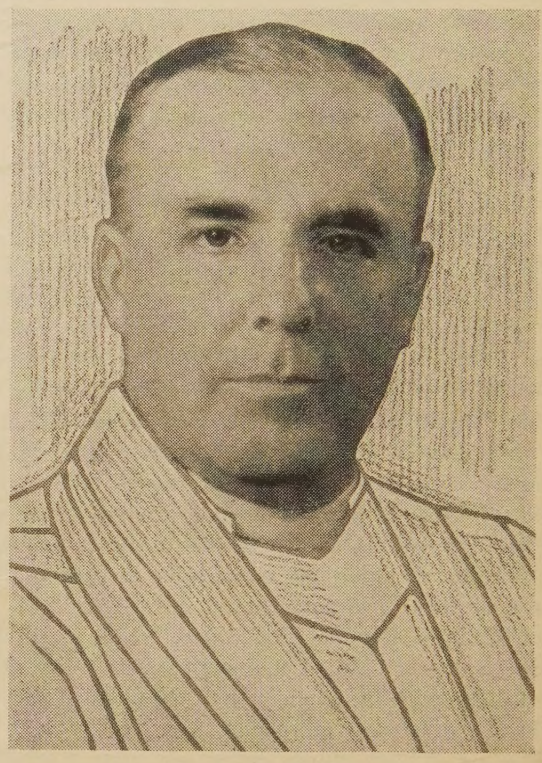
Wherever we turn, we find glimmerings and expectations of the incarnation. In all pagan religions we find this expectation. The Greeks speak of the descent of the gods in the likeness of men, to dwell for a brief space with mortals. The instinct for a human God is well-nigh universal. The pagan myths speak of this instinctive craving of the human heart; they all point towards Bethlehem.

These are a priori considerations; but they are worth while. It is natural for God to reveal himself, and because of his kinship with God, man is the best medium for that revelation.

The New Testament's Witness

Now, why do we believe that Jesus was the incarnate God?

There is the witness of the New Testament: To believers in the Bible as the word of God, the testimony of the Bible as to the deity of Christ places the



H. P. Almon Abbott

matter beyond dispute. The New Testament, from first to last, consistently proclaims the deity of Christ. It is not a matter merely of the gospel according to St. John; but of all four gospels. It is not a matter merely of all four gospels; but also of the epistles. It is a matter of the whole New Testament. The deity of Christ in the New Testament is axiomatic. It is taken for granted. Faith in the deity of Christ is the atmosphere in which the early Christians lived and wrote. The deity of Christ is present in solution from St. Matthew's gospel to the book of the Revelation of Saint John. The New Testament writers give their whole-hearted love to Christ. They ascribe to him the attributes and prerogatives usually ascribed to God. They find in him the springs of their spiritual life. They regard him as the foundation of the church. They speak of him as an ever-present and almighty power. Without any suggestion of irreverence, they link together the names of God and Jesus in their thoughts and in their prayers.

No scholar disputes that this is so. No critic worth the name denies that the apostles and early Christians

worshiped Christ as Lord. Even Pliny, in the early part of the second century, says that the Christians "sing hymns to Christ as God."

There are those persons who disapprove of the fact that the apostles magnified, embellished and idealized Jesus. After Jesus passed away, they say, a process of deification set in. This disparagement of the apostles' testimony is foolish and gratuitous. It was unwilling testimony. The apostles were Jews, and with the Jew monotheism was a passion. They did not expect the Messiah to be divine. And, yet, in spite of their ancestral training, they were compelled to speak of Jesus as God. All their preconceived notions had to give way to the evidence of facts.

Jesus and His Contemporaries

Let us see what sort of an impression Jesus makes upon them.

Wherever he went, Christ started questionings. The attitude of people towards Jesus in the days of his flesh may best be described as an interrogation point. Everything he said, everything he did, made people wonder. This means that Christ was not like other men. There was a difference, and everybody felt it. We read biographies of famous men. They leave us admiring. They do not necessarily leave us wondering. Their conspicuous gifts are well within the compass of human nature.

Jesus, on the other hand, leaves us wondering. He is an enigma. He is a mystery, a puzzle, a problem—how can we understand him! In very truth, never was there a man like this man.

Jesus' Claims for Himself

Here are some points in which the difference between Jesus and other men is striking:

There are the immense claims he makes for himself. Take these instances in the synoptic gospels: "Come unto me, all ye that labor . . . and I will give you rest." He deliberately announces himself as the object of man's search, as the answer to man's age-old desires. For man's weariness, what does he propose? He proposes himself!

"If any man come unto me, and hateth not his own father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life, also, he cannot be my disciple." How staggering! To follow him is the supreme thing, and, if needs be, the most sacred human ties must be irremediably shattered!

"Ye have heard it said by them of old time, but *I* say unto you." He sets himself above Moses, above all the prophets.

"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears";

A Christmas Prayer

By Henry Knox Sherrill

OUR Heavenly Father, we come into Thy presence with hearts that are grateful for the gift of Thy Son. We are filled with thanksgiving that he came not with pomp and in glory, but as the Babe of Bethlehem, taking our human nature upon him, meeting our temptations, bearing our burdens, sharing our common life. We bless Thy name for this revelation of Thy love, which suffereth all things, even unto the Cross. Wilt Thou forgive the coldness of our hearts, the uncertainty of our minds, our feebleness of purpose, our narrowness of vision.

By the manger of Bethlehem make us as little children in Thy house; stay the fever in our hearts; center all our purposes in Thy will. Help us to realize that life does not consist in the multitude of things, in the gaining of power or prestige, but in the loving service of our fellow men and of Thee, our Father, who first loved us. In the presence of the Holy Family, grant that we may sanctify all our family life, that we may regard not only our own children, but all children throughout the world as Thy gift. In our homes we pray that we may be simple, sincere, wise, and patient, placing first those things which are invisible and yet eternal.

By the journey of the Wise Men open our eyes to the truth that Thy kingdom is universal, that Jesus came not for the few but for all men of every race and color and age. By their example teach us, O God, that in all our life the most precious things are to be given Thee. We confess that we are tempted again and again to keep the best for ourselves. Awaken in us the realization that as all things have come from Thee, so it is our privilege in every detail of life to serve Thee alone.

By the angel chorus, with its message of peace on earth, good will to men, wilt Thou lead us in every relationship to be peacemakers. We beseech Thee that all men may see clearly the selfishness and the sin which make war possible.

By the birth of the Prince of Peace give us, our Father, an intensity of purpose, the ability to live courageously, that peace may be established with righteousness and justice, between nations and between groups within the nation.

We thank Thee, O Father, for the good tidings of great joy to all men. May the hope which came to the shepherds be in our hearts, that, on fire with Thy love, we may be the means of furthering Thy kingdom, and of bringing nearer that day when Thy will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven.

he proclaims himself as the fulfillment of prophecy. Psalmist and seer pointed to—him!

All this we ask in the name of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give to us life more abundant. Amen.

Surely such a person presents a problem! If a mere man made such stupendous claims, we would account it insanity, or monstrous, blasphemous egotism. If it was egotism on Christ's part, however, then the perfection of his character goes by the board. Jesus says, "I am meek and lowly of heart," and we feel that he was. It is the argument from a dilemma, and it is incontrovertible. "*Aut Deus, aut Homo non bonus.*" If Christ was not what he claimed to be, then he was not a good man. If he was what he claimed to be, then he must be God.

No Sense of Sin

Christ had no sense of personal sin, of moral shortcoming. He was holy, harmless, "separate from sinners." That was the impression left on the minds of his disciples. That is the impression left on our minds.

There are vast differences between men, differences of gifts, of station, of moral endowment, of spiritual perception—Elihu Root and the furnace man; Lord Kelvin and the dweller in the slums. But we are all sinners. We are all under similar condemnation. "We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God, and there is none that doeth good, no, not one." The better a man becomes, the more saintly, the more conscious he is of his sins.

Jesus is the one exception! He brings the confession of sin to the lips of others. He never himself confesses to sin. "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." "I do always the things that please Him."

It was no illusion on the part of Jesus. As we read the story of his life we see that he was, in truth, without sin. His enemies were constrained to admit that he was devoid of iniquity.

All men are sinful. Jesus was sinless. How will you explain it? I can only understand his sinlessness when I remember that Jesus claimed to be the Rest-Bestower, the Law-Giver, the Holy Judge of men—and that the claims he made were true. If Jesus is divine, then I can easily understand his sinlessness. Otherwise not.

The Voice of Jesus Christ

These arguments: the witness of the New Testament; the witness of Jesus; the claims of Jesus; the sinlessness of Jesus—these by no means exhaust the argument for the deity of Christ; but there is much in what we have considered to convince the unprejudiced mind, and to lead us to assert with Browning's Arab Physician:

> Think, Abib; dost thou think?
> So the all-Great were the All-Loving, too,
> So through the thunder comes a human voice—

It is, in deed and in truth, the Voice of Jesus Christ.

What Jesus Means to Me

By William Adams Brown

He saith unto them, "But who say ye that I am?" (Moffatt's translation: "And who do you say I am?") Matthew 16:15.

IT is a question which has been asked over and over again, so many times indeed that for many of us it has lost all individual reference and become that most familiar and yet most impersonal thing—a text in the Bible. But now and again there come times in our lives that take it out of its traditional setting and give it a direct, personal application. Such an experience came to me a few weeks ago. One of my old pupils, the pastor of a neighboring church, asked me to speak to his people on a certain Sunday morning on the subject, "What Jesus Means to Me." "I want you," he added, "to speak as a theologian, for I have asked another friend of mine, a layman, to come the Sunday before and tell us what Jesus means to him as a man."

That request set me thinking. What did Jesus mean to me as a theologian that was different from what he meant to me as a simple Christian, trying to follow him as best I could on the path along which he had led the way? If he were putting the question directly to me, as he put it to Peter—What do you think of me?—how much would my theology contribute to the answer I should give?

I am going to tell you the conclusion to which I came, not because I suppose that my experience is more interesting or more instructive than that of any other Christian, but only because I wish to set the example of thinking aloud. What indeed could be more appropriate at such a time and in such a place? We have met here in a building consecrated to the memory of Jesus to renew our allegiance to our Master and to refresh our spirits in companionship with him. Why do we do it? We can only tell by letting Jesus ask us the question he asked his disciples so many centuries ago: What do I mean to you?

Jesus and the Theologian

My friend put his question to me in a somewhat specialized form. He asked me to tell his people what Jesus Christ means to me as a theologian, and that means, I suppose, as one whose profession has required him to study the life and teachings of Jesus somewhat more technically and intensively than it has been possible for most of us who are not specialists to do. And while I am very sure that what Jesus Christ means to me as a theologian is incomparably less interesting and incomparably less important than what he means to me as a man, there are one or two convictions that have come to me in the course of my professional studies that are not without bearing upon my personal faith. Let me begin with these.

Jesus Christ means to me as a theologian, in the first place, something to be done. It is my business as a scholar to learn everything I can learn about him. And that means that, among other things, it is my business to familiarize myself with what other people have thought about him who have studied him before me. Of course no one man can know all that has been thought about Jesus, or even the hundredth part of it. But it is my duty and my privilege to know as much as I can. I have no right to an opinion about him which is not based on the best study of the facts that I can give. What has my study taught me?

Testing the New

This first. It has taught me not to accept opinions just because they are new. We hear a great many people telling us that modern scholarship has proved this about Jesus, or disproved that. When people tell you this, do not be too quick to believe them, not at least until they tell you very clearly just what it is that modern scholarship has proved or disproved and who it is that claims the right to speak in its name. Modern scholarship is a very broad term and covers the work of a great many people. More honest work has been put into the study of Jesus, I suppose, than into any other single subject that men have ever studied, save perhaps the physical universe itself, and the great majority of those who have studied Jesus impartially are agreed at least on the following points: First, that he really lived at the time and place our gospels tell us he did; second, that we have in those gospels, critically studied by the comparative methods which we use in the study of similar documents in other fields, a reliable source as to the main facts of his life, the nature and cause of his death, the character of his teaching, the influence he exerted on his followers, and the place he has come to hold in the affection and loyalty of men as the founder of the Christian religion.

There are people who still believe that some unknown genius, or school of geniuses, invented Jesus, that he is the precipitation of a sun myth, the imaginative portrait of some one who never lived. They have not been able to persuade the great majority of their fellow-students that they are right. If we do not know that Jesus was a real man, and within broad lines the kind of man that he was, we may well despair of the possibility of trustworthy historical knowledge in any field that involves judgments of character.

Jesus Not Invented

We may then confidently take it for granted as our point of departure that Jesus was a real person who lived at a certain time, gathered disciples who preserved his teaching and perpetuated his work, left an imperishable memory, and has taken his place among the immortals as one of the best beloved of the sons of men.

But there are some things about Jesus that we do not know, and these constitute the theologian's problem. We know that he was man, but we know that to his disciples he left the impression of being more than man. He was the one who showed them what God was like. More than this, he was the one through whom, as they believed, God himself came to them in the form of man to share human experience and transform and redeem it.

From that day to this these two elements have entered into Christian thinking about Christ. He is man, yet more than man; human, yet divine; brother, yet master; servant of all, yet Lord of all. How can these things be? That is the theologian's problem. All through the centuries men have been working at it and the story of what they have thought and dreamed about it would fill many libraries. I have my own attempted solution of the problem, but I am not going to give it to you this morning, for I know that it is only one man's human attempt to solve a problem which is in its very nature insoluble—the problem of the relation of God to man. Wherever it meets us—and it meets us everywhere: in nature, in history, in the church, in the Bible, in the lives of great personalities, in our own souls—it transcends our power to fathom and to master. Why should it be otherwise in connection with Jesus Christ?

Both Man and God

But of this I am sure, that no solution that suppresses either factor in the problem can permanently satisfy. That way has been tried again and again by some of the greatest intellects of the race. Sometimes they have suppressed the human factor and made Jesus only God. Sometimes they have suppressed the divine factor and made him only a man. But the solution has not lasted. Sooner or later the suppressed member has come back more vigorous and insistent than ever.

So I am not greatly disturbed when some of our contemporaries tell us that we have outgrown Jesus, since we are now so strong and so wise that we no longer need his help. Well, if any man feels himself strong enough and wise enough to dispense with Jesus, by all means let him do so. But do not let him attribute to others the attitude he takes himself. One of the striking facts in our contemporary chaos of opinion is the number of people of all countries and in all walks of life who are rediscovering Jesus. Stanley Jones, in his "Christ of the Indian Road," has been telling us of the appeal which Jesus is making to cultivated Hindus. But we need not go so far afield. There are men among our own contemporaries who have broken with historic Christianity who yet unite in the tribute they pay to Jesus as the person who best embodies the qualities they most highly esteem. They come from all walks of life. Historians, men of letters, social reformers, psychologists, students of the physical sciences, men of whom, however much they may differ in other respects, this at least can be said, that they cannot be accused of prejudice in favor of organized religion.

Of many recent testimonies to the perennial significance of Jesus, let me remind you of only three. In the preface to his book, "Jesus, Man of Genius," Middleton Murry, one of the younger English jour-

nalists and men of letters, gives this leaf out of his spiritual autobiography:

> In the words of the man who was in spirit, but not in fact, his beloved disciple, who understood once and for all time the eternal significance of his Master, "Jesus came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly." The old ways of approach to that life-giving stream are closed to many modern men. For these I write. We have to know him after the flesh. There is for us no other way. But to know him after the flesh is to know him after the spirit; for we shall find that he was, in very truth, the ineffable Word made Flesh.

Shaw on Jesus

Bernard Shaw can certainly not be regarded as a witness who is prejudiced in favor of Christianity. But this is what he has recently been reported to have said about Jesus:

> I am not a Christian any more than Pilate was. . . . But I am ready to admit, after studying the world of human misery for sixty years, that I see no way out of the world's troubles but the way Jesus would have found, had he undertaken the work of a modern practical statesman.

And this, finally, from Havelock Ellis, quoted in Mims' "Adventurous America":

> No person probably ever made so ardent a personal appeal as Jesus. He discovered a whole new world of emotional life, a new expansion of joy. . . . It is his distinction that he has for us permanently expanded the bounds of individuality. We all breathe deeper and freer because of the semi-ideal carpenter's son. . . . So that now when I open and turn over with reverent joy the leaves of the gospels, I feel that here is enshrined the highest achievement of man the artist, a creation to which nothing can be added, from which nothing can be taken away.

Jesus and Our Lives

But it is not of what Jesus means to other people that we are thinking now, but of what he means to us. If we were to try to put into words what we have found in him that justifies the central place that we give him in our own lives, how should we do it? Let me give my own answer for what it is worth.

First of all, then, I turn to Jesus because he helps me to make real to myself the kind of man I personally ought to be. When I think of Jesus it is of one who carried within himself the secret of happiness, one who for all his sympathy with the sorrow and tragedy of life could always see the sun shining through the clouds. Children loved him. People in need and sorrow instinctively turned to him. He was the kind of person with whom they loved to be.

And they loved to be with him because they knew he loved to be with them. He cared for people, all kinds of people. He saw the good that was in them and he helped them to see it in themselves. He never lowered his standard of what was best for them, even if it meant a break for the time. But he never was tired of forgiving them when they had gone wrong and would come back.

This love of Jesus had a deeper root. It was rooted in his trust in ultimate goodness. Jesus believed in a God who was himself love, and because God, the All-Wise, could find something to love in men, Jesus found his own faith in men reinforced and justified. This trust made him brave. It gave him courage to bear disappointments that would have shattered any less virile faith. There was nothing that could break the human spirit that Jesus did not have to meet—the betrayal of disciples, the untrustworthiness of friends,

William Adams Brown

the fickleness of the multitudes, social ostracism at the hands of the leaders of nation and church, and at last the bitter agony of the Garden and the Cross. But his resolution held true, and his hope for the better future that God would some day bring out of the sorrow of the present.

The Peace of Jesus

So when I think of Jesus I think of such things as happiness, love, trust, courage, hope, and with these a quality rarer and more elusive still—that inner serenity he called his peace. It is because the word "Jesus" calls to my mind that kind of picture, the picture of the man I am not but which I feel I ought to be, that he holds so indispensable a place in my thought.

A second reason why I cannot dispense with Jesus is because he gives me my clearest picture of what God is like. I do not need any one to prove to me the fact of God. That rests on foundations so deep that I have no fear that any future happening will shake it. My sense of dependence, my consciousness of responsibility, my capacity for reverence—all that is in me that looks up and out and forward makes me aware that I am in direct contact with a reality greater and worthier

than I whose nature and purposes continually elude me. But when I ask myself how I am to think of this reality, I find myself involved in insuperable intellectual difficulties. How can I, a being finite and transient, touching reality only for the briefest moment and in the smallest part, make for myself a picture of the one who is from everlasting to everlasting and with whom are the issues of life? Only as I can find some symbol that gathers up in a form that lends itself to emotional as well as to intellectual interpretation the things I instinctively believe. Such a symbol I find in Jesus. He gives me my clearest picture of God, for in him I find united those qualities for which my heart cries out in ultimate reality—supreme love, perfect righteousness, and above all an unwearying patience that no disappointment can discourage and no failure dismay.

Toward the Kingdom of God

One thing more Jesus does for me. He gives me the leader I need in the struggle that I share with all men of good will for a just and brotherly social order. And he does this not because he shows me in detail how the ideal order is to be realized, or even what it is to be like when he comes, but because he illustrates in his own person the spirit that must animate us all in its quest.

It is an interesting fact that at the very time when the gospel of individual self-expression is being preached to our young people with a vigor to which it would be hard to find a parallel in history, all over the world men and women are showing their innate longing for authority by responding with a loyalty little less than amazing to the men who have the courage to command.

Look where you will—whether to Italy where Mussolini is preaching the gospel of the sovereign state, or to Moscow where the spirit of Lenin is marshaling the youth of Russia for the battle of the proletariat against the capitalist, or to the vatican where the head of the Roman communion is calling his errant Protestant children back to the bosom of Mother Church—everywhere you find a revival of external authority. Even in our own country there are men and women, too, who tell us that the days of democracy are numbered and that the freedom to differ is too dangerous a gift to be entrusted to modern men.

Loyalty to a Commander

What can we do who believe in freedom in the face of tendencies like these? Must we alone go leaderless, or is there some one to whom we can give wholehearted allegiance without the surrender of conscience? Here Jesus meets us at our point of greatest need, for in him we find a leader who asks no surrender of individual conviction but wins his disciples by the inherent attraction of the message he brings. In the brotherhood to which he invites compulsion has no place, but he is master who has most to give. When I grow discouraged at the slow progress we are making toward the better society for which we long, I think of Jesus, the crucified Galilean, and how he won his way to sovereignty over the spirits of men, and I win new courage and hope.

The Indispensable Jesus

These then are the reasons why I cannot dispense with Jesus: because he is the one who helps me to be the kind of person I know I ought to be, because he is the one who gives me my clearest picture of what I feel sure God must be like, because he gives me the leader I need in the struggle I share with all men of good will for a social order which shall be at once just and free.

Am I told that I cannot prove that Jesus is the kind of person I have described, that a critical analysis of his character would resolve all these qualities into their constituent elements and finally explain them away? That is of course always possible. I am not concerned to deny it. But it doesn't touch the point that I am making here. No one of all the things I value most has come to me by the way of analysis. There is not one but a systematic skepticism could explain away. My love of friends, my joy in nature, my sense of duty, my consciousness of responsibility, even the bare conviction that it is better to live than to die: these things I cannot prove. I simply recognize them when I see them with a certainty which I can neither explain nor evade.

Living with Jesus

So it is with Jesus. I win my conviction that he is what I believe him to be simply by living with him and letting him make his own impression upon me as he will. That is what I have been trying to do for some sixty years, of which more than thirty have been occupied with a critical study of his person and work. And I have told you what he means to me today.

What does he mean to you? That is a question that each of us must answer for himself. And not in words only, but in his life. For still his voice comes to us across the ages: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." And with the summons comes the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

One There Was

ONE there was who, passing by,
Touched all life with alchemy;
Grass of field or birds of air
Made His heart of God aware.
Of common salt or smooth-worn yoke
A figure patterned for eager folk;
Of wayside spring or granary
Symbols He made which never die;
From mustard seed or branching vine,
Similitudes of things divine.
Meaning to leavening dough He lent;
He made, of bread, a sacrament.

STELLA FISHER BURGESS

Jesus—An Unfinished Portrait

By Edgar DeWitt Jones

"Sir, we would see Jesus." John 12:21.

THE old inquiry of the guests who had come up to Jerusalem for the festival, "Sir, we would see Jesus," is still being asked. The existing portraits of Jesus are many. Art, Literature, Theology, Ritual, Institutionalism have done their best, but the likeness is dim. Only the portrait of Jesus as exhibited in character is satisfying and alas, it too is unfinished. . . .

It was the last week of Jesus' life. The festival occasion was on and pilgrims filled Jerusalem to overflowing. Thus, into the midst of the worshipers, gathered from all points of the compass, came Jesus to his cross. There was a great deal of curiosity to see the Galilean prophet. Strange rumors were on the lips of the people. It was said that at Bethany Jesus had brought back from the dead, Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha. Many tongues wagged and the excitement grew. Wherever Jesus and his disciples appeared on the streets of the city, crowds followed them. Certain Greeks, who had come a long distance, appealed to Philip, saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Moffatt translates it, "Sir, we want to see Jesus;" Weymouth, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

A Natural Question

This request of the Greeks was perfectly natural. They had heard much about the new teacher. A reverent curiosity prompted their request to see him and possibly ask him a question. They were seekers after God, and while the record does not say so, I think we may infer that the Greeks saw Jesus, that they heard him speak and conversed with him about the deep things of the spirit.

For nineteen hundred years, multitudes have repeated the inquiry of the Greeks, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Moreover, a sincere attempt has been made to present Jesus not only to those who have expressed a desire to see him, but also a passionate purpose to take a portrait of him into distant and hostile regions. The non-Christians too must see Jesus, for the missionary passion is born of him. Even among those who have grown up in a Christian environment and have been made familiar all their lives with the Christ of the churches, there has remained something of this wistful desire to experience a fuller vision, a deeper insight, a more adequate understanding of Jesus Christ.

I

Of portraits of Jesus, there have been many. Art has portrayed Jesus on imperishable canvasses. Many of the famous masterpieces are scenes from his life—"Jesus in the Temple"; "Jesus and the Little Children"; "Jesus among His Disciples;" "Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration"; "Jesus in the Garden"; "Jesus before Pilate"; "Jesus on the Cross." With such subjects the great painters have glorified their work. Christ in art is an interesting study, often inspiring, sometimes touching, nearly always impressive. But there are limitations. The Christ of the painters as works of art are one thing; as interpreters of the Jesus of Galilee, the portraits leave much to be desired.

There is no authentic painting of the Galilean prophet. Nobody knows how Jesus looked. There is no genuine description from which the artists might work. Imagination has achieved much in the field of religious art, yet it is always an unfinished portrait of Jesus that hangs on the walls of the famous galleries. "We would see Jesus" is the cry on the lips of those whose eyes are weary from gazing upon the Jesus of Art. Masterpieces indeed, but what would one not give for a glimpse of the Jesus who talked with the woman at Jacob's well!

II

Literature has contributed richly to the portrait of Jesus. There is a library of immense proportion on the subject. If all the volumes with Christ as theme could be assembled, they would form a mountain of surprising size. Nor could one estimate fairly the research, scholarship, intellectual acumen, patient investigation, prodigious labors represented in that literary mountain. There are the biographies, commentaries, encyclopedias, philosophic studies, poetry, drama, essays and criticisms—the stream is full to the banks and seems endlessly flowing.

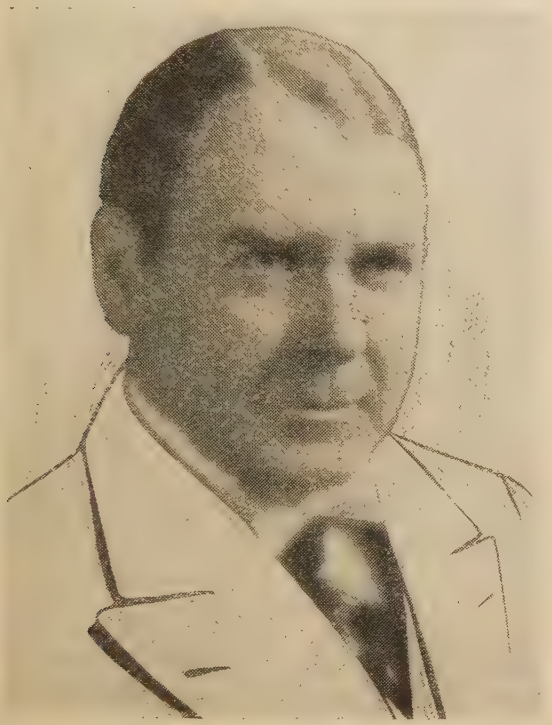
There are the famous lives of Christ, by Geikie, Edersheim, Farrar, Strauss, Renan, Andrews, Nicoll, Hanna, Fleetwood—to list but a few. Some years ago a distinguished scholar, specializing in the realm of church history, declared it unlikely that other important "lives of Christ" would be written; yet within the past decade have emerged notable biographies of Jesus by such famous authors as Papini, Rabbi Klaussner, Ludwig, Case, and Gilbert Murray, not to mention the hundreds of lesser known volumes having for subject the founder of the Christian faith. The world's debt to the literary portrait of Jesus is very great, but it is an unfinished picture and even the scholar, grown gray over much study, cries out, "Sir, we would see Jesus."

III

Theology offers a notable portrait of Jesus. It is easy to belittle theology. There is a cheap way of disposing of theology with a languid wave of the hand, a sneer, a frown. Theology is not as important as religion, but it is important. "Theology is preceded by religion, as botany by plant life, or as geology by the structure of the earth. Religion is the reality of which theology is the study." Theology is the science of religion, the opinions of man about God analyzed and systematized. There is no more reason for speaking contemptuously of theology than speaking in like

manner of any science where the patient labor of the specialist is deserving of praise.

The trouble with theology is that it tends to become fixed and dogmatic. The theologians and the creed-makers have only too often composed their portrait of Jesus and sought to give it an official imprimatur, saying, "This is the genuine portrait, all others are spurious." It is somewhat confusing when you have a dozen portraits of Jesus by master theologians, each one saying, "This is the only genuine picture." It is an indisputable fact that most religious reformers have been suspicious and fearful of dogmatic theology. Some of these sturdy radicals, in their attempt to restore the



EDGAR DEWITT JONES

New Testament portrait of Jesus, attacked theology vigorously and repudiated as tests of faith the doctrine of total hereditary depravity, the Adamic sin, imputed righteousness, eternal decrees, predestination and foreordination. They did not deny that there were elements of truth in the theological picture; they admitted as much, but they saw likewise distortion, and error, and boldly told the world what they saw.

There will always be a place for the theologian. The best minds in every generation should be at work upon the science of religion, musing about God, reflecting upon man, poring over history and studying the streams of thought of the times. A restatement of the great Christian doctrines in the light of present day learning and modern conditions is needed in every generation; yet at its best, the theologian's portrait of Jesus is incomplete and men cry as they yearn for something not yet realized, "Sir, we would see Jesus."

IV

Ritual has achieved a rich and rewarding portrait of Jesus. Religious pageantry is very old. The ancient Jewish faith stressed form and ceremony. Employing eloquent symbols and elaborate rites, the Jewish people worshiped God, making much of holy days, ceremonies and festivals. The description in the Old Testament of the Jew at worship is aflame with color; the golden candlesticks, the ark of the covenant, the altar with its bleeding sacrifice, the singing of the vested choirs, the melodious temple music—all of this was an endeavor to interpret God, appealing to the eye and the ear. Christianity has made much of its symbols. One branch of the church has brought over something of the glorious ritual of Israel and given it a Christian setting—the pageantry of the mass and the dramatization of the crucifixion. What vivid coloring in this portrait of Jesus, and how strong the appeal to the deeply emotional!

A Return to Beauty

Protestantism, in its revolt from the ornate ritualism of the Catholic church, swung far out to the opposite extreme, either to an austere simplicity or a breezy informality, lacking dignity, and suffered thereby. Now the tide is coming back and there is a distinct enrichment of worship in those churches known as non-liturgical and with a reputation for simplicity and democracy. The trend toward beauty in worship is unmistakable.

The symbols of Christianity belong to all the church, not part of it. No communion has a monopoly on the cross, the worldwide symbol of Christianity. The time has come when it is no longer possible to identify the particular body of Christians by the cross topping a tower or spire. An orderly service, processionals and recessionals, robed choirs and even gowned ministers have replaced the haphazard, slipshod ways of conducting worship in some churches where a decade ago such innovation would have divided congregations. This is significant. There can be no doubt of the appeal of a worshipful background and a reverent atmosphere to the soul of man. Dr. Theodore Munger, following a description of the services of the Anglican church, adds the significant comment: "Here lies the secret of public worship—we do not worship because we feel like it, but that we may feel it."

The appeal of religion is fourfold: to the eye, the ear, the mind and the emotions. Ritualism, therefore, has its justification. Ritualism has painted the most vivid of all the portraits of Jesus, yet amidst the stately ceremonies, the age-old symbols, gorgeous pageantry, the heart of many a worshiper has ached, and from quivering lips has come the prayer, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Ritual's portrait of our Lord, rich and elaborate, ornate and realistic, is unfinished, inadequate.

V

Institutionalism has contrived to present a portrait of the Christ all its own—the picture of a busy, bustling, efficient Master. There is something distinctly modern and of the western world in this portrait. It shows Jesus as an organizer, a man of affairs, capable, industrious. The institutional side of Christianity is a

formidable affair. There are the vested interests, vast and sometimes sinister because of their vastness. Imposing arrays of statistics, tabulated to date and on exhibition. What a multiplicity of commissions, committees, societies, are enlisted and recorded in the name of Jesus! In some sections of the church there is a genius for organization and the thing is achieved after the most approved methods of office management. The phrase "selling religion" and even "selling Jesus," falls easily from the tongues of ecclesiastical promoters and occasionally appears in the religious press. There is to be sure a business side to the conduct of a church and the various societies formed for the promotion of by-products of Christianity, but these "side issues" when promoted aggressively and exploited out of all proportion, become deadly foes of that which matters most in religion—the devotional life and spiritual-mindedness.

Over-Organization

There are those who go so far as to hold that institutionalism has no place in Christianity, or if so, a distinctly minor place. Discerning minds know only too well what over-organization will do to a local church —committees, societies, dinners, drives, innumerable activities, paraphernalia of the market-place, the bazaar and the carnival. It is not surprising that occasionally ministers leave the pastorate, giving the reason of one city pastor who resigned from the pulpit "in order to do religious work." A certain amount of organization is necessary in the propagation of the Christian faith, but the thing has been overdone and the reaction has left us cold. The point is that the picture of Jesus offered by institutionalism and organized Christianity is partial, inadequate and disappointing. Great buildings, vast memberships, multifarious organization—these are imposing, often spectacular. Yet many a weary church worker has sighed amid the confusion of feverish activity and murmured, "Sir, we want to see Jesus."

VI

The most satisfactory portrait of Jesus yet offered to the world is his spirit-transforming human character. Your portrait of Christ may be more perfect than a del Sarto or a Raphael. Writing to one of the early churches, Paul said of them that they were "living letters, known and read of all men." This is high praise. The living portraits of Jesus have answered as nothing else the pathetic cry, "We would see Jesus." It is good to remember that Paul himself said that Christ lived in him, and in his writings he spoke of "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

It was this living portrait of Jesus in the hearts of those early disciples that made them irresistible. When Stephen died outside the city wall with a prayer on his lips for those who stoned him, a young rabbi standing near him saw Jesus in Stephen's dying act and heard Jesus in Stephen's dying words. Stephen's portrait of Jesus started Saul on the way to Christ. When John and Peter were before the Jewish tribunal and threatened under pain of punishment not to preach or teach any more in the name of Jesus, they were startled by the answer of the two defenseless men: "Whether it be right for us to harken unto God rather than unto you, judge ye, but as for us, we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." They saw Jesus in the lives of those two men transfigured by his spirit, all aflame with his passion for a redeemed humanity.

A Cloud of Witnesses

The romance and victory of the missionary enterprise is the story of living portraits of Jesus Christ. Mrs. Judson's lovely portrait of her Master broke down every barrier and enabled her to receive undreamed of concessions from the Burma king which furthered the missionary cause. Recall Livingstone in Africa—what a portrait of Jesus! Stanley, the explorer, confessed that he was an atheist until he met Livingstone. What made Stanley a believer? The portrait of Jesus he saw in the life of David Livingstone. Just now the loveliest portrait of Jesus in India is mirrored in the life of E. Stanley Jones. But time would fail me if I spoke of John Wesley, who awakened a sleeping nation and a cold and indifferent church; of St. Francis of Assisi, so gentle of heart he called every living thing his brother; of John Bunyan, who went to jail for Jesus' sake; of John Knox, who said, "Give me Scotland or I die;" of General William Booth, who went out into the east end of London, saw the misery and the crime and said, "I hunger for hell" and plunged into that hell only to bring there a touch of heaven; of Father Damien, who chose to cast his lot with the lepers in the misery of their island home and died a leper's death; of a great host at home and abroad, in high places and in obscure corners of the earth, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, white and black and brown, men and women and little children in whose lives others have seen Jesus and were glad.

The portrait of Jesus as exhibited in the character of those who have been captured by his spirit is the only Jesus that multitudes will ever see. Theology is a closed book to millions; elaborate rituals have slight appeal to host upon host who "the straight, hard path have trod"; organizations, however high-powered, leave myriads cold. But Jesus-like men and women, human beings who reflect the mind of Christ and possess his spirit, these in all verity are the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Yet even this portrait of Jesus, yours and mine, everybody's portrait of Jesus is unfinished.

Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be,
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
Yet more of reverence in us dwell,
That mind and heart according well
May make one music as before,
But vaster . . .

Beginning the New Year With God

By Murdoch MacKinnon

"In the beginning God" . . . . Genesis 1:1.

HOW to begin? That is the question. The sprinter knows that the fraction of a sixteenth of a second during the most nervous and uncertain instant before the gun goes off determines the winner. For the Marathon, a very different beginning, but equally important to know how to conserve one's strength in the early stages in order to summon all the reserves in one glorious finish. How to begin the speech. That is the hardest part of the speech, harder even than the proverbial peroration. How to start off with the article or story. The first page or two may make all the difference between a handsome cheque and a painfully polite refusal slip. The beginning of the sermon is easily the most critical part in the preacher's preparation for his Sunday work. Not to grip his congregation the first four and a half minutes is to miss his opportunity for that day.

How to begin the New Year. That, too, is a vital matter. There it lies before us, all untried and unknown. It is sure to bring before us wide fields of opportunity in service and many-sided calls for human helpfulness. As of yore, temptations are lurking around the corner. Some people are going to fall, but they will arise to fight better; some will fail utterly. And there are those whose patience and integrity will be rewarded by unexpected recognition and promotion. The seeds of laughter and of tears await the light of a new day about to dawn and the sound of hurrying footsteps anticipate the entrance of a New Year already knocking at our doors.

How shall we begin? From the experience of the past and from the light of the sacred page, the answer is flashed upon us that we must begin with God. To cherish the thought that God is and is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him; to realize that we are co-laborers together with him in a mighty enterprise of building up a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men; to believe that his strength is made perfect in our weakness; to hear his word of encouragement in the hour of sorrow and prove the comfort of his fatherly compassion when and where we need it most; to trust his sustaining grace in the daily round and to look for the consecrating touch of his loving hand when joy fills the heart—this is surely to begin the year aright.

God and Our Life

"In the beginning God." That is how the story of creation opens. It is not otherwise in the story of every creative process known to man in art, science, religion and life. Love in all its inherent powers and potencies traces its ultimate origin to him. No man's genealogy is complete that stops short of Abraham, the father of the faithful, and of God, the Father of us all. It is he who gives depth to our motives and richness to our purposes. He gives steadiness to the hand to construct and patience to the spirit to achieve. Indeed, what dreary prospects without him? How dark the future apart from the thought of him and how hopeless the outlook but for the assurance of a compassionate Father who demands of us only that which is within our power and who wills the best for every one of us.

We have nothing but good to anticipate when we remember him whose benevolent will determines that all things are working toward a common end. When

Murdoch MacKinnon

the conviction that "God's in his heaven" results in the presentation of our lives for his service, we, too, can say with Robert Browning, "All's right with the world."

Yes, because the world, too, begins with God. Of itself it is neither creative nor self-existent. The scientists may patiently trace the beginnings of life back to its elemental constituents, but even then the question, "Whence this life?" remains unanswered. Has the inorganic the power under certain given conditions to produce life within itself? Then it is no longer inorganic, but organic. Can that which neither lives nor grows give rise to all living things? Can self-conscious existence be looked for in a world where thought and consciousness have not already been at work? Can the end of the process show us something not already involved from the very start? These are but samples of ten thousand questions that stare us in the face when we proceed to determine the world upon a purely materialistic plane.

God is the presupposition of all creative processes. The fundamentalist is hopeless, therefore, when he limits the area of God's creative activity to a few days or years at what we poetically speak of as the dawn of creation. The evolutionist is equally hopeless when he seeks to eliminate God from the processes whose laws and operations he more or less accurately observes. To formulate a law is not thereby to eliminate the thought of the law-maker. To know the laws by which the earth moves or the light travels or by which we live is not to deny reality to these phenomena. It is rather to give the grand affirmative to all three and to imply that life, thought and consciousness, finding an enlarging expression in us, must be presupposed from the very first.

That is to say, in the beginning God. It is in him all things cohere. He is in himself the eternal realization of all that time and the world-process enable us to bring to pass.

God Will Perfect His Work

Do we say that God is in the beginning of life and the world? Then he will finish what he began. He never leaves a thing half done. Our hope for the final perseverance of the saints is based not upon the inherent spiritual quality of the saints, but upon the nature and perseverance of God—"being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in them will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ." When he undertakes to redeem a world he will not relinquish his task any more than the Good Shepherd will give up the search for the lost sheep "until he find it." The healing, saving processes which he set in motion shall continue until we all attain unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

If this world began in God it is not now on its way to final ruin. It is no compliment to the Creator to believe that there must be a general collapse of all the material, moral and spiritual achievements of the centuries before the kingdom of God can come. We are not prepared to pass a vote of want of confidence in the divine artificer of the universe. The world is no blunder. God's best gifts to men are not mere remedial measures, consequent upon our misdeeds, but the natural outflowing of his divine compassion, and his unwearying concern for the children of his heart. That world is off to a good start, which has at its beginning God, whose benediction followed when all the morning stars had sung together. Its destiny is not to be one grand tragedy.

> My own hope is, a sun will pierce
> The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
> That after Last returns the First,
> Though a wide compass round be fetched;
> That what began best can't end worst,
> Nor what God blest once, prove accurst.

There is a famous French painter, whose practice it is to begin his picture with the sky. Beginning in this way he is able to reproduce the colors and aspects of all nearer objects with an accuracy he could not otherwise command. Let us begin there, too. We are engaged in the task of making life's picture and are anxious that it should be a good picture in color, tone, perspective and character, meriting the "well done" of the Master Artist. Let us begin with the sky. Begin the New Year with him that our service may be creative and fruitful and the future full of promise. For he who is at the beginning will welcome us at the end and meet us at every turn of the road.

VERSE

At the Feet of Christ

THE world sits at the feet of Christ,
Unknowing, blind, and unconsoled;
It yet shall touch His garment's fold,
And feel the heavenly Alchemist
Transform its very dust to gold.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

The Face of Jesus Christ

IS this the face that thrills with awe
Seraphs who veil their face above?
Is this the face without a flaw,
The face that is the face of love?
Yea, this defaced, a lifeless clod,
Hath all creation's love sufficed,
Hath satisfied the love of God,
This face, the face of Jesus Christ.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Praesto

EXPECTING Him, my door was open wide:
Then I looked round
If any lack of service might be found,
And saw Him at my side:
How entered, by what secret stair,
I know not, knowing only He was there.

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN

Still Thou Art Question

WE place Thy sacred name upon our brows;
Our cycles from Thy natal day we score;
Yet, spite of all our songs and all our vows,
We thirst and ever thirst to know Thee more.
For Thou art Mystery and Question still;
Even when we see Thee lifted as a sign
Drawing all men unto that hapless hill
With the resistless power of Love Divine.
Still Thou art Question—while rings in our ears
Thine outcry to a world discord-beset:
Have I been with thee all these many years,
O World—dost thou not know Me even yet?

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

WHO'S WHO IN THIS ISSUE

No more dynamic personality stands in any pulpit than Dr. JOHN TIMOTHY STONE. He followed Maltbie D. Babcock, that virile saint, at Brown Memorial church, Baltimore, and twenty years ago came to Fourth Presbyterian church, Chicago, where he built its famous gothic edifice. Since his recent resignation to become president of the Presbyterian Theological seminary in Chicago, he is engaged in rebuilding the habitation of that institution. Dr. Stone is a part of everything good in Chicago, and in his denomination. He is a former moderator of the general assembly.

There was a loud lament when the Rev. H. P. ALMON ABBOTT, who was then pastor of St. Chrysostom's church, Chicago, resigned its pulpit to become Bishop of Lexington, Ky. The lament was due to the fact that Dr. Abbott was getting to be recognized as an outstanding pulpiteer. Though an Episcopalian, he emphasized preaching. But being a bishop has not hurt the preacher in him! He goes everywhere throughout his diocese—and through all the nation—kindling the hearts of his hearers with a winsome and powerful message which springs out of the fine mysticism which is kindred to his nature.

What a beautiful testimony that is which Dr. WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN, professor of theology in Union Seminary, New York, gives in his sermon about the meaning of Jesus! Read it again, this time not only to get Jesus but to get Brown. He could have used long, hard words, and complex sentences, but he does not. Little domestic words he has chosen. Dr. Brown has been one of the most *useful* professors in America—he has had a hand in city and national and international movements of all kinds. His latest book, "Pathways to Certainty," is having a wide sale.

A preacher, a church builder, an author, a world traveler, an editorial writer, a civic leader—and such a pastor!—that is Dr. EDGAR DEWITT JONES, of Central Woodward Church of Disciples, Detroit. The best of Jones comes out in conversation. His mind is full of the lore of American history, Lincolniana, literature and current politics. And he knows when to stop and let you talk!—a rare and grateful art.

WENDELL PRIME KEELER *has been for* thirteen years pastor of First Presbyterian church, Yonkers, N. Y., and is now moderator of the synod of New York. He has chosen for his Christmas sermon an old text, but how timely and original the sermon!

*The Baptists, Presbyterians and Congre-*gationalists have to put their strongest men in their Evanston, Ill. pulpits to hold the pace set by the Methodists at that Northwestern University center. And for substantial thought, strong utterance, wise counsel and well judged administration the Evanston Baptists know that Dr. JAMES M. STIFLER cannot be beat! And his brother pastors of the big churches on nearby corners know it, too, and gladly confess it. He is an alumnus of Brown University, and a trustee of the University of Chicago.

Another sermon this month from Canada. How those Canadians can preach! Dr. MURDOCH MACKINNON sounds the New Year note for our readers. He is now minister of Runnymede United church, Toronto, but his previous ministry touched the extreme east at Halifax (eight years) and the far west at Regina, Saskatchewan (fifteen years). It would be a mistake, however, to say that he has now settled down at the golden mean! He is one of Canada's leaders.

The Christmas prayer is contributed by the Rt. Rev. HENRY KNOX SHERRILL, who was recently consecrated Bishop of Massachusetts, after seven years in Phillips Brooks' pulpit at Trinity church, Boston.

TITLES *and* TEXTS

What PULPIT Readers are Preaching About

CHARLES R. ERDMAN, Princeton Theological Seminary. "Christ and Pilate." Matt. 27:22—"What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON, St. James Church, Philadelphia. "Creating Peace." Matt. 5:9—"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be ranked sons of God."

FOR YOUR SERMON TITLE AND TEXT
(Mail to The Christian Century Pulpit)

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Title of sermon

.....
Text used (Write out the text)

.....

.....
Name of minister

.....
Name of church

.....
Address

EDGAR A. HOULDRIDGE, First M. E. Church, Murrayville, Ill. "Is Your Goodness Good?" Rom. 14:16—"Let not then your good be evil spoken of."

E. R. ANTHONY, M. E. Church, Hebron, O. "Spading the Soil of the Soul." Hos. 10:12—"Break up your fallow ground."

H. T. RAFNEL, Baptist Church, Vevay, Ind. "Distinctive Christians." John 15:19—"I have chosen you out of the world."

HOMER W. CARPENTER, First Christian Church, Louisville, Ky. "Making God in Man's Image." Psa. 58:21—"And God said, thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself."

FREDERICK K. STAMM, Clinton Avenue Congregational Church, Brooklyn, N. Y. "The Modern Saint," Rom. 1:7—"Called to be saints."

W. F. HELDSTAB, The Community Church, Ludington, Mich. "Captured By Christ." Phil. 3:12—"Because I have been captured by Christ."

A. I. COX, First M. E. Church, Mingo Junction, O. "Haphazard Faith." 1 Cor. 15:2—"The gospel by which you are saved . . . unless your faith is all haphazard."

NEIL CRAWFORD, West Boul. Christian Church, Cleveland, O. "A Lean-Souled Generation." Prov. 106:15 "He gave them their desire, but sent leanness into their soul."

G. BARRETT RICH, United Presbyterian Church, Lebanon, Ky. "Why Religion?" John 10:10—"I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

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The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE FATE of India hangs upon the round table conference now in progress in London. All groups in India are represented—save one, the nationalist party of which Gandhi is the leader. Prime Minister MacDonald faces a colossal task. With his minority government depending for its very existence upon winning to the support of his policy a sufficient number of votes from opposing parties, he cannot play a free hand. The Indian groups have all said their say, and their speeches focus upon the united demand for an autonomous India, dominion status within the British empire being taken as a satisfaction of this demand. To this Mr. MacDonald has acceded, but with unmistakable reservations as to its being granted immediately. How long must India wait? What form shall the government take in the meantime? What formula can be found to insure a progressive attainment of that goal? Meanwhile, Gandhi is in jail, a prisoner of British power. His problem is to restrain his followers from resort to violent methods as they wait without hope for the outcome of the conference. If Britain refuses substantial independence now, the effect upon the national spirit, which centers in Gandhi, will inevitably produce widespread uncontrollable disorder. Anything may happen. But one thing is almost sure to happen. To hold his followers back from violence, Gandhi will himself enter upon a fast. If his fast restrains them before it proves fatal to him, there will be opportunity for pacific adjustments. But if Gandhi should die—a martyr to non-resistant revolution—India would be lost to Great Britain forever.

The Book of the Month

CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND MODERN PROBLEMS. *By W. R. Inge. Putnam.* $3.00.

THE FAMOUS DEAN of St. Paul's, London, begins his latest volume with the statement, quite unemotional in its tone of voice, that this is "probably the last considerable work that I shall have time to write." He addresses himself to what he regards as the supremely important problem of our time—namely, the relation of the gospel of Christ to the actual problems of conduct which have emerged in modern life. He takes nothing on bare authority, not even the gospel. On the contrary, he investigates the gospel to find whether it really possesses authority. His conclusion is that the Christian way of life is a unique revelation whose authority is inherent in its character. But he has to strip historic Christianity of layer after layer of false accretion. In two directions, especially, the original stream has run into channels inconsistent with its primitive source. One is historic asceticism. The other is what he calls "theocratic imperialism," by which he means the Roman Catholic church. Both of these are rejected, the latter with some incontinence. Yet in the ascetic ideal of self-discipline Dean Inge finds a principle that is fully congenial to the pure Christian ethic. Having completed his historical and critical attempt to release essential Christianity from its historic perversions, he boldly confronts the problems which engage the modern conscience in order to find a Christian solution of them. Race, industry, science, population, the position of women, war—all are considered under the heading of social problems. Under personal ethics he deals with sex, divorce, suicide and such questions with a freedom of approach which has startled his British public, but which he claims is not only allowed but required by the ethics of Christ.

A Thought for the Month

ONE of the ruling motives of our moral life is to hand something of value on to the future. We wish to live in our children, to increase their wisdom by our instruction and our example, to insure that their lives shall be as full and rich and complete as with our help they can be made. On the larger scale, we desire to leave to our community or our nation or the world some increment of happiness or progress or wisdom which those coming after us will identify with our name. Virtue always has this forward look. But it also has a backward look. We are debtors to the future, but we are also debtors to the past. We owe something to our children, but we also owe something to our fathers. The past is not dead. It is alive, and waits for us to serve it. Our deeds are retroactive. We are partners with all the great men and women who have gone before us. Their service to humanity is not complete until we have performed our part. Without us, no great thinker or emancipator can complete his own work. The heroes whose deeds are recounted in the eleventh of Hebrews all died in the hope of our coming, because they without us could not be made perfect. No leader of mankind ever consummated his life—that was reserved for us to do. All great men left their tasks unfinished. Abraham, Moses, Isaiah and Paul; Plato and Kant and Spinoza; Luther and Pestalozzi and Lincoln, wait for us to finish their work. It is they and such as they who are the great cloud of witnesses in the amphitheatre watching eagerly as we run our race. They have a stake in our performance. Even Jesus' life was not complete. It is our inspiring task to complete it. Paul calls the life of Christ an unfilled cup, and declares that the ruling passion of his own life is to fill up to the brim the cup of his Master's suffering! Our fellowship with Christ is no mere romantic emotion; it is intensely realistic. Unless we share his life, his life remains forever incomplete.

Charles Clayton Morrison

What are our young ministers preaching about?

—*and how are they preaching it?*

The JANUARY Issue of The Christian Century Pulpit will be a

Young Ministers' Number

Each of the seven sermons included in that issue will be contributed by young men who have graduated from the seminaries within the past five years. The heads of seminaries were asked to name three or four ministers graduating from their schools during the past five years— those who have already achieved worthily or who show most promise for future achievement. These young men have been asked to submit manuscripts; from the sermons submitted the Editor of the Pulpit is selecting seven typical sermons reflecting the state of mind and the homiletic emphases of the new generation of preachers.

THIS SPECIAL ISSUE will be of very great value as indicating the trend that is being taken by our newest ministers in their preaching. Watch for the Young Ministers' Number — in JANUARY.

The FEBRUARY issue will include a Lincoln sermon, but the issue will be given largely to GOOD GOSPEL SERMONS, by representative preachers of today.

The fact must not be overlooked that while the Pulpit endeavors to present, each month, sermons for the "high days," its primary purpose is to publish *good* sermons, *representative* sermons, from ministers of all denominations on both sides of the Atlantic.

AS A MIRROR of current preaching, The Christian Century Pulpit is invaluable. What kind of sermons are being preached in American and British pulpits? On what themes? Of what character — homiletic, or devotional, or timely — the Pulpit tells you from month to month.

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